

Editor's Six Core Questions

Game of Thrones - Season 1



What's the Global Genre?

For the Season:

External: Society > Political

Status > Admiration

What is the Global Life Value?

Threat to life hangs in the air, it's in every beat. It's a brutish life, when even a slight can get you killed. It's because of the threat to life that the values of Society are so important. Power keeps you alive, impotence is a slippery slope to death. On the scale of Action's life and death we see everything from life to death to damnation.

What are the objects of desire?

Starks: To have justice restored and power shifted to the rightful heir

Lannisters: To have power and get the throne

Daenerys: To have power and get the throne

What's the controlling idea/theme?

We gain power when we prove our ruthlessness, status and authority

What are the Obligatory scenes of the Global Genre (Society)

- **There is an inciting threat or challenge to the reigning power:** Ned Stark discovers that the death of Jon Arran was murder, that the Lannisters are seeking power
- **The protagonists (subjugated persons) deny responsibility to respond or to rise up against the antagonist (reigning power):** Ned does
- **Forced to respond, the protagonists lash out according to their positions in the power hierarchy:** Ned starts to investigate what Jon Arran was looking at before he died
- **The protagonists' initial strategy to outmaneuver the antagonist fails:** Ned Stark confronts Cersei and warns Cersei that she will have to leave

- **The protagonists learn what the antagonist's object of desire is and sets out to achieve it for themselves:** Ned changes the wording of the will to make sure that Robert's heir is the next King rather than Joffrey
- **During an All-Is-Lost Moment, the protagonists realize they must change their approach in order to shift power from the antagonist to themselves:** In person, Ned Stark realises that he and his family will die unless he pledges loyalty to Joffrey
- **The protagonists' gifts are expressed in the Revolution Scene. (Core Event) This is the Core Event and Climax of the Society story where the power either changes hands from the subjugators to the subjugated (protagonists succeed) or the subjugators remain in power (protagonists fail). The winner and the loser are made clear:** Ned Stark confesses to his crime in front of the audience, and Joffrey still orders his execution
- **Whether the protagonists win or lose in the Revolution Scene, they are rewarded in the Resolution or Climax on either the internal, the interpersonal, or the external level:** Ned dies, but his death has disrupted Joffrey's reign, the Northerners will now fight against his rule. Had Ned shown loyalty at the start, the Lannisters would have had full power.

What are the Conventions of the Global Genre?

Conventions

- **There is one central character with offshoot characters that embody a multitude of that main character's personality traits (the mini-plot)**
In Game of Thrones we have the full cast of characters in each family.
Starks: Ned Stark is one of the main characters (steady, warrior), Catelyn Stark (emotional, impulsive), Arya Stark (rebel, fighter), Sansa Stark (obedient, power seeker), Rob Stark (King in Waiting), Jon Snow (black sheep of family, honourable, noble)
- **There is a "big canvas:":** Winter is coming, Whitewalkers are returning, political game of thrones
- **The power divide between those in power and those disenfranchised is large and evident to the audience:** The hunger for power is evident, we see how badly treated prostitutes and lesser men are treated. The ease at which life is discarded shows the power divide.
- **There is a clear revolutionary Point of No Return: The moment when the power shifts is clearly defined and dramatized. This is the big event, the climax:** Ned Stark's execution is the dramatic shift in power, everything we knew to be safe is no longer safe. We are shaken.
- **The vanquished group is doomed to subjugation, exile, or death:** The Starks now face a high threat to life. The Stark children are in trouble: Bran is crippled, Arya is on the run as a boy, Rob is planning war but is inexperienced and Catelyn is in grief
- **The ending is paradoxical and bittersweet, either a win-but-lose or lose-but-win for the protagonists. What they lose is specific to the sacrifices they made in attempts at gaining power and well-being:** Rob Stark and Jon Snow are maturing into leaders, and Arya is proving

herself to be a fighter. Ned's death leaves us with more bitterness than we'd like but the story isn't over yet.

What's the point of view?

Me! Multiple point of view characters. Heavy use of **Dramatic Irony**.

Here's an example:

The first episode starts with the encounter of men from the Night's Watch with a White Walker. One guy survives and deserts the Night's Watch and flees south.

He is ultimately killed for deserting the Night's Watch because his news of the undead walkers sounds like an old tale. No one believes him. Something the people from the North have stopped believing in, and his news won't influence their judgement. Even though that moment is not the inciting incident of the story itself, it is an **inciting incident for the viewer** because we are indeed witness to the existence of the White Walkers. We have seen them, too! We know what the deserter talked about is true.

Another example: we know who pushed Bran out the window, but the characters spend the whole first season trying to figure it out. Ned Stark shows mercy to Cersei by telling her that he knows about her secret, unaware that she had tried to kill his son.

What is the Beginning Hook, Middle Build, Ending Payoff?

BEGINNING HOOK

Editor's Note: There are so many things happening. We start the series with the men mysteriously killed and this is the Inciting Incident for the Series and the horror genre, but in this specific season we're tracking Ned Stark as a Society Story.

Inciting Incident:

Society (core season storyline): King Robert Baratheon, Ned's old friend, travels to Winterfell to recruit Ned and propose a marriage between his heir Joffrey and Ned's daughter, Sansa (Episode 1)
(power/impotence)

Other storylines are also kicked off in the beginning:

Horror (core series storyline): Men mysteriously killed North of the Wall (Episode 1) (life/death)

Action: To hide their incest, Jaime pushes Bran from the high window.

War/Love: Daenerys is forced to marry the Dothraki warlord, Drogo, in exchange for an army to conquer Westeros and reclaim the Iron Throne

Progressive Complications: Jamie pushes Bran from the tower when Brandon sees Jamie with Cersei, Brandon doesn't die and an assassin is sent to kill him, Lady Stark travels to tell Ned of her suspicions, the Night's Watch recruits are not what Jon Snow thought it would be, Sansa betrays Arya

Turning Point Progressive Complication: Ned Stark's brother-in-law (Hand of the King) dies suddenly and suspiciously (Episode 1) (life/death)

Crisis: Does Ned Stark assume the role of the Hand of the King? (Episode 1)

Stakes: Ned senses that something is happening, Winter is Coming - if he leaves, he won't be able to protect his family and the Northern Kingdom. If he doesn't go, he will be turning down his friend and his

king, and he knows he is probably the best person to talk sense into his friend and advise him for the sake of the 7 Kingdoms (not drive the 7 kingdoms into war again) (life/ death)

Climax: He does. (Episode 1)

Resolution: He begins to see how much power the Lannisters have over the king and the 7 kingdoms (debt, Cersei's influence over the king when she insists that Arya's wolf be killed) (Episode 2 and 3)

MIDDLE BUILD

Inciting Incident: Ned Stark discovers that John Arryn might have been killed (E4)

Progressive Complications: Ned discovers the bastards, clues to the mythical White Walkers returning in the North, Brandon almost killed by brigands, Brandon has visions, Daenerys becomes empowered and her brother is killed and she becomes pregnant, Robert orders Daenerys' death, Mormont betrays and saves Daenerys, Bronn saves Tyrion and starts working for him, Catelyn kidnaps Tyrion, Ned confronts Cersei about her children

Turning Point Progressive Complication: King is dying from a hunting wound (E7)

Crisis: Does Ned Stark confront Cersei and Joffrey or leave King's Landing? (E7)

Stakes: If he does not try and assume his role as "Protector of the Realm", the kingdom will be left in the Lannister hands who he sees as the wrong heirs since Joffrey is a bastard son of his mother and her brother. If he stays, he puts himself and his daughters in danger.

Climax: Ned decides to confront them with the document signed by King Robert (E7)

Resolution: Ned Stark is taken prisoner and all his men are killed (E7)

END PAYOFF

Inciting Incident: Rob Stark finds out about his father's death and assembles his armies to fight the Lannisters (E8)

Progressive Complications: Jamie is captured, Drogo gets sick and dies, Daenerys loses her baby, Lannisters lose fight with Rob Stark

Turning Point Progressive Complication: Sansa gets Joffrey to agree to show Ned mercy if he admits publicly that Joffrey is the rightful king (E8)

Crisis: Does Ned Stark admit that Joffrey is the rightful heir or not? (E9)

Stakes: Sansa and Ned's death if he does not agree; if he agrees, then the truth will be hidden and he might die anyway or at least be assigned to the Night's Watch

Climax: Ned confesses his crime (E9)

Resolution: Ned is killed anyway, Sansa is captive, Arya escapes, Tyrion is made Hand of the King, Daenerys emerges through the fire with dragons (E9 and 10)